
Regional Council Activity Report

May 22, 2002

Briefing to Member Agencies from Executive Director James M. Bourey



Executive Director's Report

On May 30, the Maricopa Association of Governments held a press conference officially launching its Regional Videoconferencing System, and marking the realization of one of the MAG Regional Council's highest identified priorities.

The new Regional Videoconferencing System is one of the first of its kind to be implemented in the nation. The purpose of the 30-site system is to reduce travel throughout the region, thereby alleviating traffic congestion and improving air quality. Sites to receive the videoconferencing equipment through MAG include 24 cities and towns, two Indian communities, and Maricopa County. The remaining three videoconference rooms are located at the MAG hub site.

The system received funding from the Federal Highway Administration as an air quality demonstration project, and the MAG system can be used as a model for other regions around the nation. The press conference included interviews with three Regional Council members, who related their experiences with videoconferencing and how it has saved their communities time and money. Other benefits highlighted included an increase in meeting participation and attendance, expanded outreach to citizens, and the fact that videoconferencing offers a secure, safe, and convenient alternative to business travel – a benefit important to many jittery post-September 11 travelers.

In addition to the official implementation of the Regional Videoconferencing System, MAG also launched its redesigned Web site this month. The system offers better functionality and a friendlier feel. The new site has its own Web server and features an improved navigation system, new search capabilities, feedback pages, calendar listings, news, publications, and updated member, committee and project pages.

It is always gratifying to us when we are able to offer our members, stakeholders, and customers new benefits. And because so much of our important work is completed without a lot of fanfare, it's also nice to have some visibility in the process. We hope that you will find the new Regional Videoconferencing System and Web site beneficial to your community, and that you are able to begin utilizing them to your utmost advantage.



Regional Council Meeting Report for Wednesday, May 22, 2002

Council Approves FY 2003 Budget

The MAG Regional Council has approved a resolution adopting the FY 2003 MAG Unified Planning Work Program and Annual Budget. The purpose of the document is to provide member agencies, grantors, and the public with the Regional Council's policy direction and fiscal commitments in the agency's regional planning efforts.

The budget reflects total expenditures of about \$12.6 million. Moderate increases in personnel costs are projected, with an overall decrease in overhead costs.

The Council approved the budget with the exception of several changes addressed through amendments. The Council wanted more time to assist in the development of a scope of work for three additional staff members in the area of Regional Development. Those positions would be phased in, and would be budgeted under amendments to the program once the scope of work is developed and the need for the positions established. Other changes included removing budgeted expenditures dealing with a potential MAG name change and certain support involving Town Hall events.

For more information contact Becky Kimbrough, MAG Fiscal Services Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Apache Junction Gains Voting Seat on Regional Council

The MAG Regional Council has approved granting membership to the City of Apache Junction, and directed that the MAG By-laws be changed to include the addition of the city. The MAG Governance Task Force had recommended extending MAG membership to local governments in the contiguous urbanized area, which applied to Apache Junction. Apache Junction had earlier been granted a non-voting seat. Apache Junction adjoins the City of Mesa, and a small portion of the city is within Maricopa County. Because Apache Junction is considered by the Census Bureau as part of the urbanized area, the Federal Highway Administration has included the city in the calculation of federal funds for transportation planning and programming purposes in the region. The addition of Apache Junction increases the size of the Regional Council from 30 to 31.

For more information contact Dennis Smith, MAG Assistant Director, (602) 254-6300.

Approval Given for Annual Town Hall

In support of another recommendation from the MAG Governance Task Force, the Regional Council gave approval for MAG to proceed with implementing an annual Regional Town Hall Meeting. The town hall meeting would be used to advise the Regional Council on goals and policies, with invited participants representing a broad section of the public, non-profit, and private sectors. The town hall meetings would be open to the public to view and provide comments. In addition to the approval to implement the regional town hall meetings, the Regional Council voted to form a subcommittee to develop the goals, policies and budget for the annual Regional Town Hall Meeting.

For more information contact Dennis Smith, MAG Assistant Director, (602) 254-6300.

Short Range Transit Report Approved

The FY 2002-2006 Short Range Transit Report has been approved by the Regional Council, contingent upon a finding of conformity for the MAG FY 2003-2007 Transportation Improvement Program. The Short Range Transit Report is prepared and updated by the Regional Public Transportation Authority on behalf of MAG. In addition to providing recommendations for transit improvements over the next five years, the report also includes a summary of the regional transit system's operating characteristics from FY 2000-2001. A link to the report can be found on MAG's Web site at www.mag.maricopa.gov.

For more information, contact Anne MacCracken or Jim Dickey, RPTA/Valley Metro, (602) 262-7242.

Upcoming Events



Desert Peaks Awards Ceremony

Regional excellence will once again be honored at the fifth annual Desert Peaks Awards June 26. The ceremony will follow the Maricopa Association of Governments Annual Meeting at the Phoenix Airport Marriott Hotel on June 26, 2002.

The Desert Peaks Awards honor individuals and partnerships in five categories, including Public Partnership, Public-Private Partnership, Professional Service, Regional Partnership and Regional Excellence.

Finalists have been selected, and recipients will be named during the awards program. Finalists include:

Public Partnership:

City of Surprise/Dysart Unified School District Partnership
Westside Training Consortium

Public-Private Partnership:

City of Tempe/Thomas J. Pappas Elementary School, Tempe
Coyotes Arena/Mixed Use Development
River Recycling Materials Recovery Facility
Valley Bike Week

Professional Service:

Gene D'Adamo
Roger Klingler
Kerry Wangberg

Regional Partnership:

Mesa-Phoenix Regional Wireless Network
Phoenix Fire Department Regional Training Academy
Regional Plan Review Program
Surprise Fire Department Alternative Response Program

Regional Excellence:

Louise Marques
Mayor Skip Rimsza
Mary Jo Waits

A reception will begin at 5:30 p.m., followed by dinner at 6:30 p.m. and awards at 7:30 p.m. Linda Williams, anchor/reporter for Fox 10 news, will serve as the master of ceremonies. A State of the Region Address will be given during the dinner portion of the program.

For more information contact Kelly Taft, MAG Communications Manager, (602) 254-6300.

Next Regional Council Meeting

The next Regional Council meeting will be the MAG Annual Meeting to be held on Wednesday, June 26, 2002 at 5:00 p.m. at the Phoenix Airport Marriott Hotel, 1101 N. 44th Street, Phoenix. Agenda items are expected to include election of officers; requested changes to the MAG Regional Freeway Program; a 9-1-1 budget and equipment request; a discussion of candidates for the Transportation Policy Committee, and proposed amendments to the MAG By-laws. The Regional Council meeting will be followed by the Desert Peaks Awards Evening.

For more information contact Dennis Smith, MAG Assistant Director, (602) 254-6300.